

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L REYKJAVIK 1180

E.O. 11652\$ GDS
TAGS: PFOR, IC
SUBJECT: VISIT OF ICELANDIC FOREIGN MINISTER AGUSTSSON

REF: STATE 203453

1. DURING COURTESY CALL WHICH ADMIRAL ISSAC C. KIDD, JR., SACLANT, ACCOMPANIED BY AMBASSADOR MADE ON FOREIGN MINISTER AGUSTSSON AUGUST 26, FOREIGN MINISTER INFORMED SACLANT THAT PRIMARY PURPOSE OF HIS VISIT TO U.S. IN SEPTEMBER WOULD BE TO DISCUSS U.S. ASSISTANCE IN OBTAINING FINANCING FOR CONSTRUCTION OF CIVILIAN AIR TERMINAL KEFLAVIK. FOREIGN MINISTER REVIEWED BRIEFLY INTEREST OF GOI IN THIS SUBJECT, AND SAID HE HOPED TO OBTAIN POSITIVE USG RESPONSE RE "ALTERNATIVE MEANS" OF FINANCING TERMINAL IN INTEREST OF SEPARATING CIVILIAN FROM MILITARY FACILITIES AT NATO BASE. FOREIGN MINISTER INDICATED HE ALSO LOOKED FORWARD TO MAKING ACQUAINTANCE OTHER MEMBERS OF ADMINISTRATION CONCERNED WITH US-ICELANDIC RELATIONS. SACLANT, IN REPLY, INDICATED FAMILIARITY WITH SUBJECT OF TERMINAL BUT INDICATED IT LAY OUTSIDE SCOPE OF HIS RESPONSIBILITIES. FOREIGN MINISTER SAID HE WAS AWARE OF THIS, BUT BELIEVED THAT HE SHOULD INFORM SACLANT OF PRIMARY PURPOSE HIS VISIT TO WASHINGTON VIEW SACLANT'S RELATIONSHIP TO NATO BASE.
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AMBASSADOR TOOK OCCASION TO COMMENT THAT WASHINGTON CONSIDERATION OF ANY SUGGESTIONS MINISTER MIGHT MAKE WOULD BE HELPED IF GOI WERE TO REFINE COST FIGURES RELATING TO TERMINAL. FOREIGN MINISTER AGREED AND SAID THEY WOULD BE READY TO PROVIDE UP-TO-DATE DATA.

2. COMMENT: MINISTER'S MANNER DURING MEETING WHICH

LASTED APPROXIMATELY 20 MINUTES WAS SOMEWHAT RESTRAINED. THIS MAY HAVE BEEN BECAUSE HE HAS BEEN BACK ON JOB ONLY ABOUT THREE WEEKS SINCE HOSPITALIZATION AND WE ARE TOLD TIRES EASILY. (WE BELIEVE HE STILL FOLLOWS ONLY LIMITED SCHEDULE AT MINISTRY.) HE SEEMED TO HAVE ONLY ONE THING ON HIS MIND AND HAVING PRESENTED IT, HE DID NOT APPEAR DESIROUS OF EXTENDING CONVERSATION ALTHOUGH SACLANT OFFERED HIM OPPORTUNITY TO DO SO AT MINISTER'S CONVENIENCE.

3. PERMANENT DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY HELGASON SUBSEQUENTLY INFORMED AMBASSADOR THAT AGUSTSSON WAS PLEASED WITH WASHINGTON RESPONSE (REFTEL), AND LOOKS FORWARD VERY MUCH TO MEETING WITH SECRETARY VANCE AND OTHERS. HELGASON SAID AGUSTSSON, ACCOMPANIED BY LATTER'S WIFE, HIMSELF AND AMBASSADOR PALL ASGEIR TRYGGVASON, CHAIRMAN, ICELANDIC DELEGATION TO US-ICELANDIC DEFENSE COUNCIL, WOULD PROBABLY LEAVE REYKJAVIK SEPTEMBER 16 TO ARRIVE SAME DAY NEW YORK. HELGASON BELIEVES MINISTER WILL OVERNIGHT NEW YORK AND SPEND WEEKEND IN WASHINGTON BEFORE COMMENCEMENT WASHINGTON TALKS SEPTEMBER 19.
BLAKE

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